



David B. Cohen

## CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Department of Planning and Development

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Public Hearing Date:	May 16, 2006
Land Use Action Date:	June 20, 2006
Board of Aldermen Action Date:	July 10, 2006
90-Day Expiration Date:	August 14, 2006

TO: Board of Aldermen

FROM: Michael Kruse Director of Planning and Development  
Nancy Radz h Chief Planner  
Alexandra anth, Planner

DATE: May 5, 2006

SUBJECT: Petition #167-06 of WEST SUBURBAN YMCA requesting to AMEND SPECIAL PERMIT/SITE PLAN APPROVAL #121-00 by replacing the existing nonconforming roof sign with an updated YMCA logo to be located on the front parapet at 276 CHURCH STREET, Ward 1, NEWTON CORNER, on land known as Section 12, Block 7, Lot 1 and Section 12, Block 14, Lot 1 containing approx. 274,971 s.f. of land, located in districts zoned MULTI RESIDENCE 1.

CC: Mayor David B. Cohen

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the Board of Aldermen and the public with technical information and planning analysis which may be useful in the special permit decision making process of the Board of Aldermen. The Planning Department's intention is to provide a balanced view of the issues with the information it has at the time of the public hearing. There may be other information that will be presented at or after the public hearing that the Land Use Committee will consider in its discussion at a subsequent Working Session.

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**The petitioner is seeking a special permit pursuant to Section 30-20(1) for exceptions to the sign ordinance to replace an existing non-conforming illuminated roof sign with an updated YMCA logo and illuminated sign. The sign would be located on the front roof parapet of the existing building and the "Y" logo would extend above the top of the parapet. The site is**

WASHINGTON

MR1

MR1

MR1

MR1

SR2

AV

ST

OAKLAND

# YMCA

## Zoning Map

### Zoning Districts

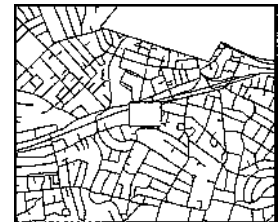
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- Single Res. 2
- Single Res. 3
- Business 1
- Business 2
- Business 4
- Business 5
- Lim. Manuf.
- Manuf.
- Multi-Res. 1
- Multi-Res. 2
- Multi-Res. 3
- Multi-Res. 4
- Mixed Use 1
- Mixed Use 2
- OS/Rec.
- Public Use

### Street Name

Buildings

Property Boundaries

1" : 401.3'



The information on this map is from a digital data base accessed using the Newton Geographic Information System (GIS). Newton cannot guarantee the accuracy of the information contained on this map. Each user of this map is responsible for determining its suitability, for the intended use or purpose. City departments will not necessarily approve applications based solely on GIS data. Applicants for city permits and licensees must inquire of the relevant city department for applicable requirements. City staff correct errors in these data as they are identified. Newton's GIS Administrator maintains records regarding the source materials and methods used to create the digital data and will disclose this information upon request.

DATA SOURCES: Natick Neosource apply map. Parcel boundaries obtained on June 1:1000 orthophoto lam maps. Building footprints and Pipecar-proportion from Beaton Edison (based on 1891 aerial photo). Wm. Mori have updated the bathym from building footprints and parcel boundaries from satellite data. INPM data (c88-N, land m) are from On Assassafa CNN Matsuo.



# YMCA

## Land Use Map

### Street Names

### Land Use

Single Family Residential  
Multifamily Residential  
Commercial  
Industrial  
Mixed Use  
Vacant Land  
Golf Course

### Open Space

Private Educational  
Nonprofit Organizations  
Public Housing  
Tax Exempt

Buildings

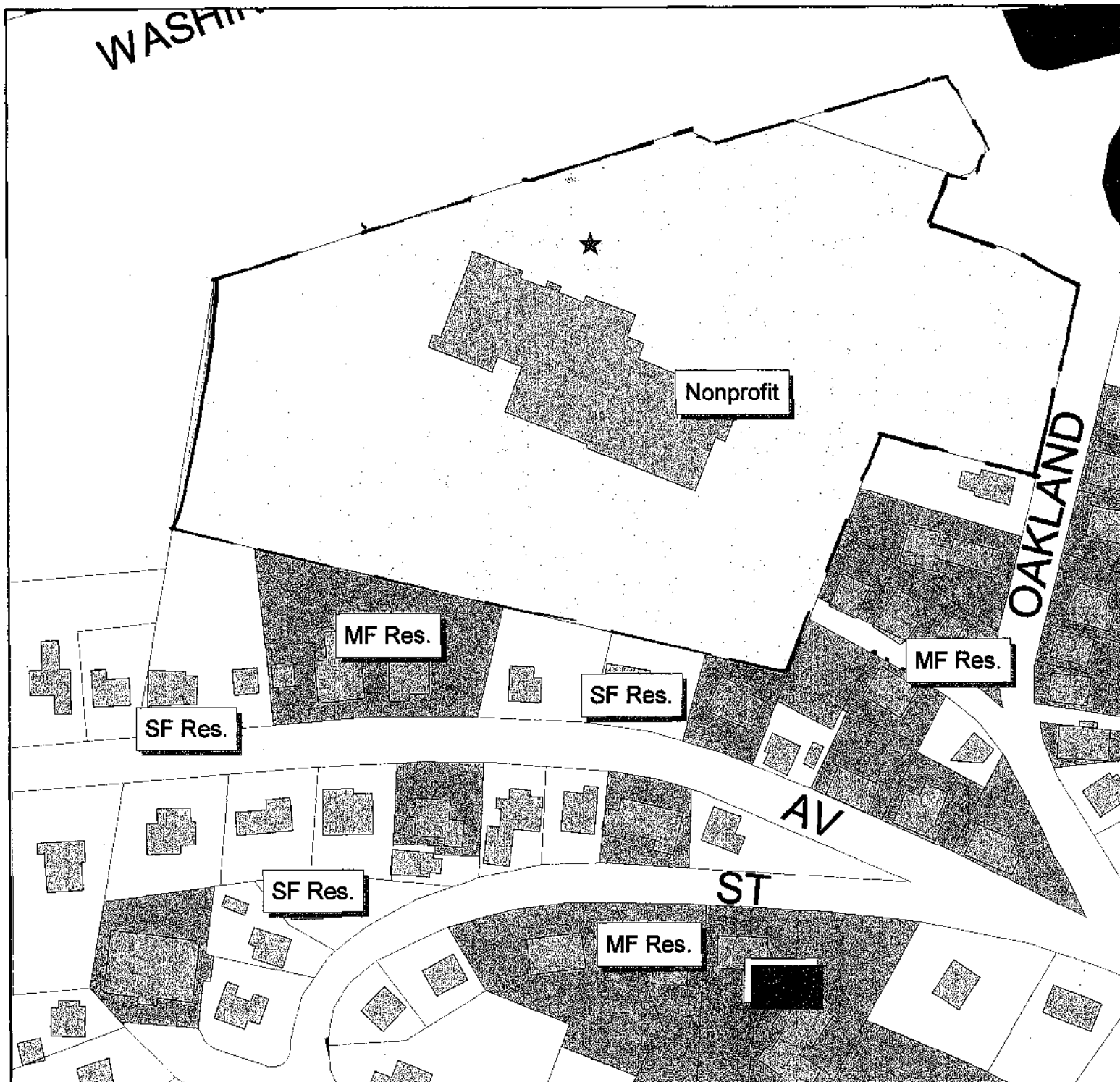
### Property Boundaries

1" : 408.8'



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BOUROSOLDI, James C. Jr.  
City of Newton, GIS Administrator  
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Fax: 617.552.3101  
E-mail: james.bourosoldi@cityofnewton.org



subject to a prior special permit — Board Order #121-00, which approved the existing sign. The request for the proposed sign necessitates amendment of Board Order #121-00.

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I. ELEMENTS OF THE PETITION

The West Suburban Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), located at 276 Church Street, is proposing to replace the existing non-conforming roof sign with a new West Suburban YMCA sign. The new sign would be located on the front parapet between the top windows and the top of the parapet; The petitioner is proposing to illuminate the sign between dusk and dawn. The new sign will conform to YMCA of USA standards.

The YMCA is a non-profit, educational facility. This type of use, like religious uses, is allowed in all zoning districts. The existing building, which was constructed in 1911, exists as a legally, non-conforming structure with respect to the front (north) setback and the building height (just over 40 feet).

The YMCA received a special permit in 2000 (Board Order #121-00) to enlarge and upgrade their existing facilities with a new 30,000 sq. ft. three-story addition, and for improvements to the existing parking facilities and landscaping. Board Order #121-00, also approved the existing sign. The request for the proposed sign necessitates amendment of Board Order #121-00.

H. ZONING RELIEF BEING SOUGHT

***Based on the Chief Zoning Code Official's written zoning determination, dated March 31, 2006 (SEE ATTACHMENT "A"), the petitioner is seeking relief from or approvals through the following sections of the Zoning Ordinance:***

- ***Section 30-20(d)(2) prohibits signs on the roof of a building or signs that extend above the roof plate line -- the placement of the sign on the front parapet puts it above the roof plate line, and the logo extends above the parapet;***
- ***Section 30-20(e)(4) for the wall sign to exceed the 20 square feet dimensional limitations applicable to institutional wall signs in a residential district -- the proposed sign is approximately 89 sq. ft;***
- ***Section 30-20(i) to exceed the hours of illumination allowed -- the petitioner is proposing to illuminate the sign between dusk and dawn;***
- ***Section 30-23 for Site Plan Approval;***
- ***Section 30-24 for Special Permit Approval; and***
- ***Amendment of Board Order #121-00.***

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

In reviewing this petition, the Board of Aldermen should consider if the nature of the use of the premises, the architecture of the building, or its location with reference to the street is such that exceptions to the Sign Ordinance should be permitted in the public interest.

#### IV. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE AND NEIGHBORHOOD

The YMCA facility sits on a fairly isolated parcel off Church Street in Newton Corner. The property is within a Multi-Residence 1 District and is bounded by the Massachusetts Turnpike to the north and northwest, and residential properties along the south. Across Richardson Street to the east is the City's Fire Station #1. The overall site is comprised of two parcels (266,290 sq. ft. + 8,133 sq. ft.), which are owned by the YMCA, and a third parcel (area undefined), running along the Massachusetts Turnpike, which is owned by the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority (MTA). The MTA has granted a permanent easement to the YMCA to use this parcel for "driveway" uses.

The existing building is a 3-story brick Colonial Revival style structure with cast stone trim. The YMCA received a special permit in 2000 (Board Order #121-00) to enlarge and upgrade their existing facilities with a new 30,000 sq. ft. three-story addition, and for improvements to the existing parking facilities and landscaping. The addition was completed in 2002. The site has a gradual slope up to the northwest from the entry point off of Church Street. Along the west and south sides of the site, just beyond the limits of the building and parking facilities the site slopes significantly up towards the abutting residential properties. This sloped area along the rear and portion of the side of the site includes a moderate number of mature trees, as well as some new trees required by BO #121-00. These trees provide a good buffer for the residential areas, particularly during the late spring through fall.

The surrounding properties to the south are all zoned Multi-Residence 1 and appear to include predominantly single-family and two-family residential units.

#### V. ANALYSIS

##### A. Signage

The existing sign is located above the roof plate line and centered on the front of the building. The petitioner has stated that the sign is run on a photo-sensitive cell and illuminated from sunset to sunrise. The Planning Department notes that the existing illuminated sign is the only signage on site.



**Photo of existing sign**

The proposed sign would be located on the front parapet between the top window and the top of the parapet, below the location of the existing illuminated sign. The proposed sign would be made of steel aluminum with plastic faced channel letters. The letters would be internally illuminated with neon, see attached sign information, (*SEE ATTACHMENT "B"*). The proposed sign would be approximately 32 ft. long and 3 ft. high, except for the "Y" logo, which would be just over 4 ft. ft. in height. The petitioner has stated that the new sign would also be run on a photo-sensitive cell and illuminated from sunset to sunrise.

The following table compares the proposed sign with the Sign Ordinance requirements:

	<b>Sign Ordinance</b>	<b>Existing</b>	<b>Proposed</b>
<b>Area</b>	20 sq. ft.	-16 sq. ft.	<b>-89 sq. ft.</b>

As seen in the above table, the proposed sign is significantly larger than the existing sign and the dimensional requirements of the Sign Ordinance applicable to institutional wall signs in a residential zone. As proposed, the sign extends above the roof plate line and the logo extends approximately 1.5 ft. above the parapet. In addition, the petitioner seeks to illuminate the sign between dusk and dawn, exceeding the hours of illumination allowed.

According to the Chief Zoning Code Official, the petitioner discussed several sign options with the Urban Design and Beautification Commission (UDBC) and the

proposed sign design received favorable comments from the UDBC. Though the Planning Department notes that most of the proposed sign would be below the roof parapet (as opposed to the existing roof mounted sign), ***the Planning Department questions the need for the sign to be so large.***

**B. Relevant Site Plan Approval Criteria, Section 30-23**

**1. Avoidance of the removal or disruption of historic resources.**

The YMCA building on which the wall sign is proposed is subject to a historic preservation restriction and *as such* the petitioner submitted the proposed sign for review by the Newton Historical Commission. The Commission approved the proposed new sign on February 27, 2006 (*SEE ATTACHMENT "C"*).

**C. Relevant Special Permit Criteria, Section 30-24**

**1. The use as developed and operated will not adversely affect the neighborhood**

As previously discussed, the site is bounded on the north by the MassTurnpike where the proposed sign would be directed. Although the proposed sign design received favorable comments from the UDBC and the Newton Historical Commission, ***the Planning Department believes the petitioner could reduce the size of the sign without sacrificing visibility. Additionally, reducing the size of the sign might eliminate the need for the logo to project over the roof parapet, which would eliminate any negative impacts on the abutting residential neighborhood if the Board were to allow for the sign to be illuminated from dusk to dawn, as proposed.***

**VI. SUMMARY**

The West Suburban Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), located at 276 Church Street, is proposing to replace the existing non-conforming roof sign with a new West Suburban YMCA sign. The new sign would be located on the front parapet between the top windows and the top of the parapet, and the "Y" logo would extend above the roof plate. The proposed sign would be approximately 89 sq. ft. The petitioner is proposing to illuminate the sign between dusk and dawn. The new sign will conform to YMCA of USA standards.

The Planning Department believes the petitioner could reduce the size of the sign without sacrificing visibility. Additionally, reducing the size of the sign might eliminate the need for the logo to project over the roof parapet, which would eliminate any negative impacts on the abutting residential neighborhood if the sign were illuminated from dusk to dawn, as proposed.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

ATTACHMENT A: *Zoning Review, dated March 31, 2006*

ATTACHMENT B: *Sign Details*

ATTACHMENT C: *Newton Historical Commission's Record of Action dated February 27, 2006*

# *Zoning Review Memorandu* "ATTACHMENT A "

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Dt: March 31, 2006

To: Kurt Douty, Director of Public Relations and Development, West Suburban YMCA

Fr: Juris G. Alksnitis, Chief Zoning Code Official



Cc: Michael Kruse, Director, Department of Planning and Development  
John Lojek, Commissioner of Inspectional Services

Re: **New wall sign above roof plate line**

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**Applicant(s): West Suburban YMCA**

**Site:** 276 Church St., Newton Cor.

**SU:** Section 12 Block 17, Lot 01

**Zoning:** Multi-Residence 1

**Lot Area:** 274,971 sq. ft.

**Current use:** Non-profit community service organization

**Prop. use:** Same

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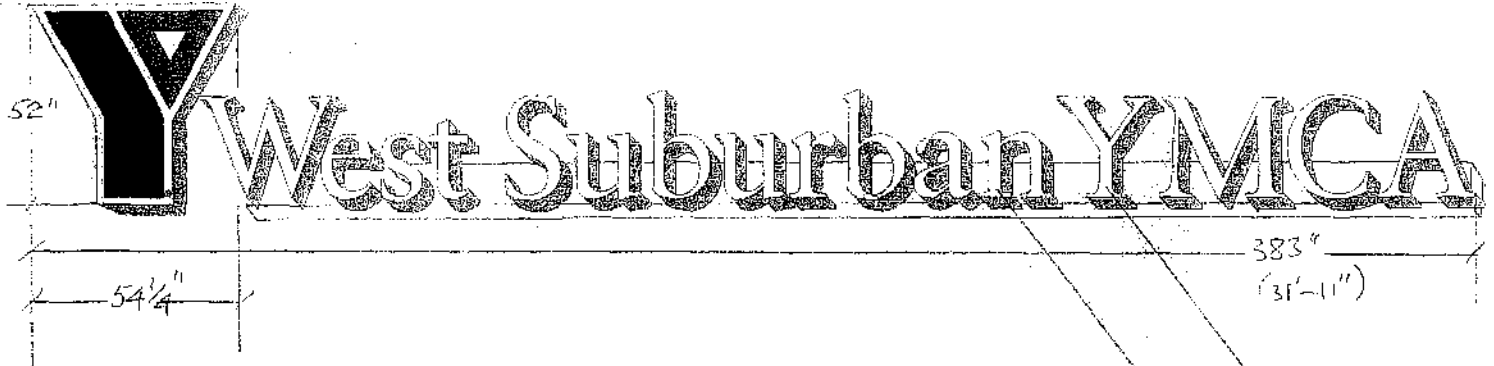
Background:

The applicant seeks to replace an existing non-conforming roof sign with an updated YMCA logo to be located on the front parapet between the top windows and the top of the parapet. In addition, the proposed "Y" logo will protrude above the top of the parapet. The applicant has discussed several sign options with the Urban Design and Beautification Commission (Commission). While the Commission found the proposed sign appropriate to the building, it advised the applicant that the placement of the sign above roof line and extension of the logo above the parapet is not allowed under current sign provisions and would necessitate approval of an exception by the Board of Aldermen pursuant to Section 30-20(1) and the special permit process. The applicant now seeks to submit the subject wall sign to the Board of Aldermen for approval.

Administrative determinations

1. The site is subject to a prior special permit – Board Order #121-00, which approved the currently existing non-conforming roof-mounted sign within plans referenced in Condition #1. The request for the proposed wall sign necessitates amendment of the previously approved plan containing the roof sign.
2. Section 30-20(d)(2), *Prohibited Signs*, does not allow signs "...which extend above the roof plate line." However, the applicant seeks to replace a non-conforming roof-mounted sign with a more conforming sign due to wall location. Nevertheless the placement of the sign on the front parapet puts it above the roof plate line, and the YMCA national logo, i.e the "Y", extends 1ft. —5 N in. above the parapet. Any sign placement or extension above the roof plate line necessitates approval by the Board of Aldermen pursuant to Section 30-20(1), *Exceptions*.
3. Section 30-20(e)(4), *Regulation of Signs in Residential Districts*, establishes the applicable dimensional requirements for the subject sign. The proposed sign is approximately 89 sq. ft., which exceeds the 20 sq. ft. area limitation applicable to institutional wall signs in a residential





**Janeddy**  
SIGN CO. INC.

617-776-5700 FAX 617-381-0900

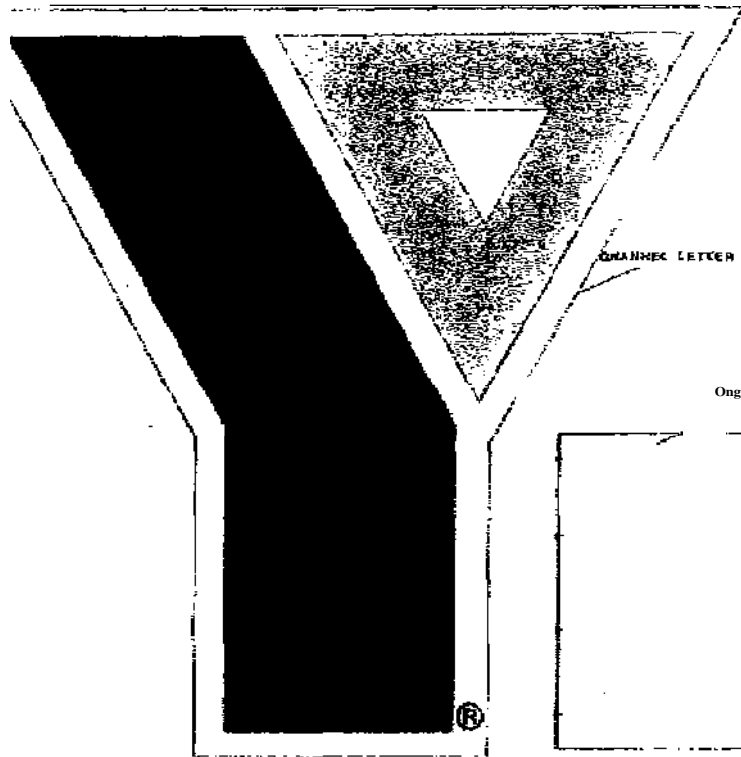
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DATE: 1.9.2006 SALESMAN: BILL PENNEY  
SCALE: AS NOTED SKETCH BY: MARK CILEYZER  
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CITY: NEWTON STATE: MA

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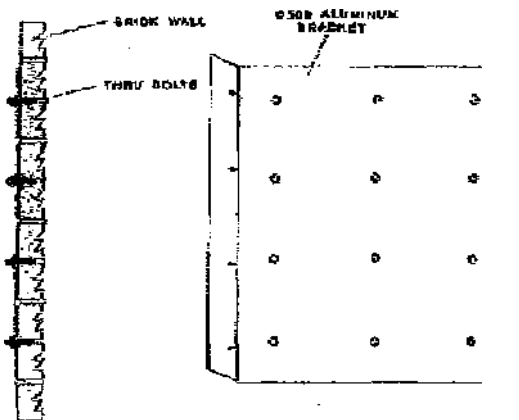
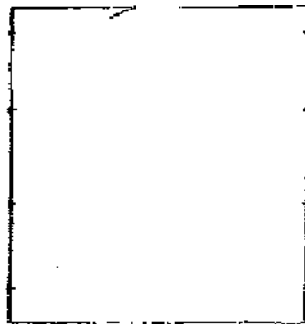
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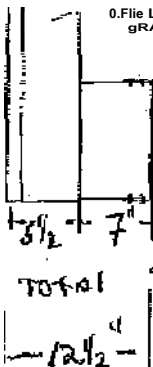


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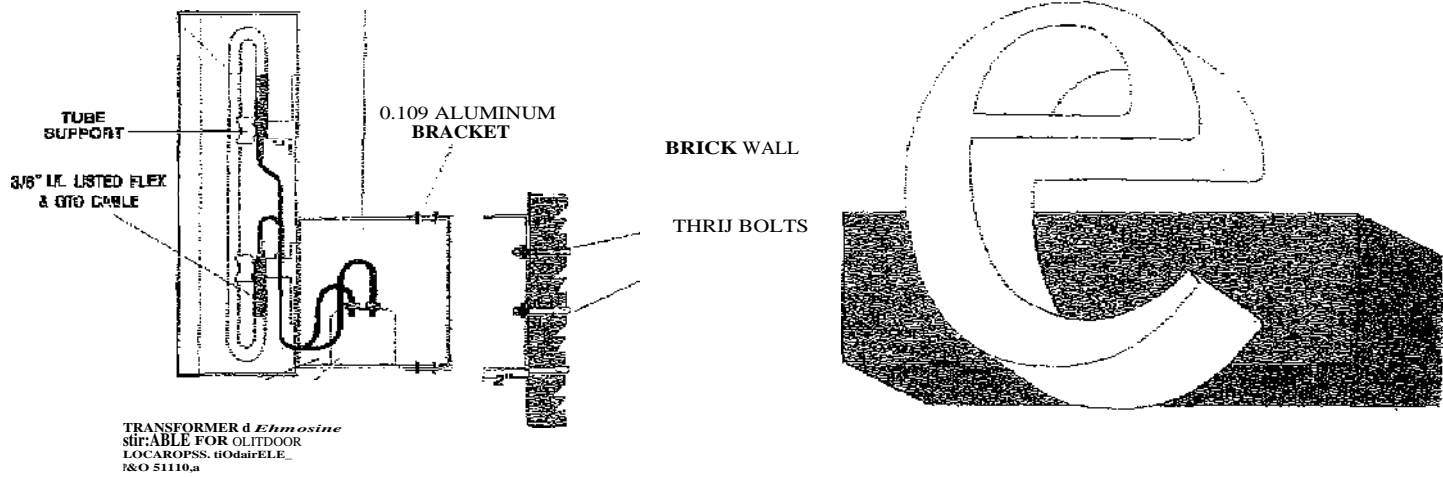
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METHOD OF INSTALLATION

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**Janedy**  
SIGN CO. INC.  
617-776-57011 nu 617-381-09110

ATT. Mr. Duffy Brent

JOS INSCRIPTION: METHOD OF INSTALLATION	
DATE: 4.11. 2006	SALESMAN; BILL PENNEY
SCALE: 11/2" -- 1'-0"	SKETCH EY; MARK GLEYZER
LOCATION: 275 CHURCH STREET	
CITY: NEWTON	STATE: MA

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David B. Cohen  
Mayor

## CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Department of Planning and Development  
Michael J. Kruse, Director

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(617) 796-1086  
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### RECORD OF ACTION

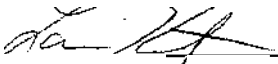
**DATE:** February 27, 2006

**SUBJECT:** 276 Church Street — Preservation Restriction Review

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on February 23, 2006 the Newton Historical Commission, by a vote of 6 to 0, passed the following motion:

RESOLVED to approve the plans to replace the existing lighted blue "YMCA" sign with the new "West Suburban YMCA" as submitted and shown in the attached drawing.

Voting in the Affirmative: John Rodman, Chairman; Rodney Barker, Allen Johnson,  
William Roesner, Nancy Grissom, Leonard Sherman

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Lara Kritzer Acting Secretary